

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 2826

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, CI
SUBJ: CIVILIZING THE CHILEAN CABINET

REF: SANTIAGO 2726

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT PINOCHET APPROVED THE NEW CHILEAN CABINET APRIL 14. NET RESULT: EACH OF THE FOUR ARMED SERVICES LOST ONE POSITION SO THAT THE 16-MAN CABINET NOW HAS 11 CIVILIANS AND FIVE MILITARY. THE NEW APPOINTEES IN THE MINISTRIES OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AGRICULTURE AND TRANSPORTATION LOOK TO BE COMPETENT BUSINESSMEN RATHER THAN WELL KNOWN POLITICAL FIGURES. SWEARING-IN WILL OCCUR APRIL 20-21. NEW FOREIGN MINISTER CUBILLOS COMES FROM NAVY FAMILY, THUS ASSUAGING THE NAVY'S LOSS OF THAT POSITION. AIR FORCE REMAINS REPRESENTED BY GENERAL MATTHEI AT PUBLIC HEALTH. THE ECONOMIC TEAM REMAINS.

2. PRESIDENT PINOCHET APPROVED APRIL 14 THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY NEW "SUPER MINISTER" FERNANDEZ (INTERIOR). TO BE REMOVED ARE ADM. CARVAJAL (FOREIGN AFFAIRS), AIR FORCE GENERAL VARGAS (TRANSPORTATION) AND CARABINERO GENERAL MACKEY (AGRICULTURE). SINCE THE ARMY LOST THE INTERIOR MINISTRY WITH FERNANDEZ' APPOINTMENT APRIL 12, EACH OF THE SERVICES HAS YEILDED ONE SLOT.

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3. HERNAN CUBILLOS SALLATO, A 40 YEAR OLD EXECUTIVE AND PUBLISHING MAGNATE, WILL BECOME THE NEW FOREIGN MINISTER IN CEREMONIES TO BE HELD APRIL 20 OR 21 (THE DELAY IS TO ALLOW TIME FOR CARVAJAL TO GET BACK FROM THE FAR EAST AND MACKAY TO COMPLETE ATTENDANCE AT A CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON). CUBILLOS (MARRIED, FOUR CHILDREN) IS THE SON OF A RECENTLY DECEASED ADMIRAL AND HIMSELF SPENT YEARS IN THE NAVY BEFORE ENTERING PRIVATE

BUSINESS. HE IS BEST KNOWN FOR HIS ROLE IN THE "EL MERCURIO" ORGANIZATION DURING THE UP YEARS. HE LEFT IN 1974 TO TAKE OVER THE PUBLISHING COMPANY THAT PUTS OUT NEWSWEEKLY "QUE PASA" AND A NUMBER OF OTHER MAGAZINES. LOCAL OBSERVERS CONSIDER CUBILLOS BRIGHT AND AGGRESSIVE; HIS DESIGNATION COME AS A SURPRISE, HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF HIS LACK OF DIPLOMATIC AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS EXPERIENCE.

4. WE ATTRIBUTE CUBILLOS' DESIGNATION IN PART TO HIS LONG ASSOCIATION WITH THE NAVY, PERENIALLY THE ARMED SERVICE MOST ZEALOUS IN DEFENDING CHILE'S FRONTIERS. (THE NAVY'S DISGRUNTLEMENT WITH CARVAJAL STEMMED FROM THE INSTITUTION'S BELIEF THAT HE WAS NOT TOUGH ENOUGH ON THE BOLIVIAN AND ARGENTINE QUESTIONS.)

5. ALFONSO MARQUEZ DE LA PLATA IRRARAZAVAL WILL TAKE OVER AGRICULTURE. A VOCIFEROUS OPPONENT OF THE UP FROM HIS POSITION IN THE NATIONAL AGRICULTORS' SOCIETY (SNA) AND PRESIDENT OF THE SNA FROM 1973-77, HE HAS BEEN CONCENTRATING ON HIS FRUIT BUSINESSES FOR THE PAST YEAR. HE IS 45.

6. JOSE LUIS FEDERICI ROJAS HAS LONG EXPERIENCE IN RAILROADING, BOTH ACADEMIC AND PRACTICAL. HE PROVED TO BE A DRASTIC COST-CUTTER DURING A YEAR LONG STINT RUNNING THE STATE-OWNED RAILROAD AND SUBSEQUENTLY WHILE OPERATING THE NATIONAL COAL COMPANY.

7. COMMENT: BESIDES THE OBVIOUS POINTS THAT EACH SERVICE GAVE
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UP ONE REPRESENTATIVE IN THE CABINET AND THAT THE ECONOMIC TEAM REMAINS UNCHANGED, WE NOTE THE ABSENCE OF DISTINGUISHED POLITICAL FIGURES IN THE NEW CABINET. THERE HAD BEEN CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION (FUELED BY THE RETURN FROM LIMA OF FRANCISCO BULNES) THAT THE GOC WOULD TURN TO OLD-LINE NATIONAL PARTY FIGURES. BUT BULNES HAS BEEN RECONFIRMED AS AMBASSADOR TO PERU AND GENERAL BRADY (OUSTED MINISTER OF DEFENSE) IS TO RECEIVE A STILL-UNDESCRIBED "IMPORTANT POSITION" IN CHILE. WHAT WITH THE LEIGH/PINOCHET SPLIT, OTHERS HAD THOUGHT THAT LEIGH WOULD PULL THE AIR FORCE OUT OF THE GOVERNMENT. THE RE-APPOINTMENT OF GENERAL MATTHEI WOULD APPEAR TO BELIEVE THAT RUMOR FOR THE TIME BEING. IN SUM, PINOCHET HAS RESTRUCTURED THE CABINET TO GIVE TECHNICALLY-QUALIFIED POLITICALLY SYMPATHETIC CIVILIANS A LARGER VOICE. BUT AT FIRST BLUSH, THE NEW TEAM DOES NOT HAVE THE POLITICAL ACCUMEN NEEDED TO PUT TOGETHER A MASS SUPPORT BASE FOR THE GOVERNMENT.
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